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SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN'S NOMINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMAN OF
COURAGE AWARD

REF: STATE 12871

¶1. (SBU) Post is pleased to nominate an outstanding Kyrgyz candidate for the IWOC Award. Ms. Bubusara Ryskulova is a well-known promoter of women's rights in the Kyrgyz Republic. She has tirelessly worked in the area of women issues for the last 10 years. First among her many accomplishments would be opening the first domestic violence prevention center for abused women and their children in Kyrgyzstan. This shelter gives battered and homeless women a place where they can rest, recover, and learn marketable skills allowing them to reintegrate back into society. Over 28,500 women have been helped by this shelter. Women have made use of the shelter's consultation services, shelter services, hot line services, and medical and psychological assistance.

¶2. (SBU) This women's shelter "Sezim" is the only organization in the country that gives such comprehensive assistance to victims of violence. It is the only shelter of its kind in the region, and has 10 beds available for women in need and their children.

¶3. (SBU) Ms. Ryskulova is a very active, energetic, and generous person. She wholeheartedly gets involved in the life of every woman who comes into her shelter. Unfortunately, the need for such a shelter is increasing in Kyrgyzstan as more discriminatory attitudes towards women become commonplace. It is very common for Ms. Ryskulova to help young women who get kidnapped with the purpose of forced marriage (a regular practice in Kyrgyzstan). When these young women escape from their kidnappers, unbelievably, the women's families often refused to take them back. Their families believe the girls had dishonored the families by refusing to respect the tradition of forced marriage. Ms. Ryskulova, on the other hand, generously offers the support of her shelter to these women. Similarly, in cases of spouse abuse, the victim is often viewed as having dishonored her husband if she leaves him or presses charges. The "Sezim" shelter offers not only safehaven for victims, but respect for their courage in standing up to abuse, and job skills training that opens doors to self-sustaining employment.

¶4. (SBU) Ms. Ryskulova works under often hostile conditions, as many victims, families disapprove of the shelter's work. That, combined with the lack of financial support for the shelter from the government makes it that much more worthwhile to applaud her courageous undertaking. She deserves to be recognized for providing sanctuary to women in need, who have nowhere else to turn for help and strength. Ms. Ryskulova has participated in several training programs sponsored by international donors, as well as from the U.S. Embassy. Ms. Ryskulova was also nominated for the Nobel Prize for Women in Peace category in 2005.

¶5. (SBU) Contact Information and DOB for Ms. Ryskulova:

-- Date of Birth: August 3, 1946

-- Title and Organization: Director, Sezim

-- Telephone Number: 996-312-51-26-39, 996-502-70-02-05

¶6. (U) Post's POC is Jasmine Cameron, Legal Assistant, Office of the Resident Legal Advisor

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